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PROGRAM

Braden & Buchanan

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SUBJECT

Resistance in Afghanistan and the CIA

TOM BRADEN: I asked Pat a question just a minute ago. How do we know that it's true, as The Washington Post says, that the resistance in Afghanistan is being sponsored and supplied by the CIA? And if it is true, should we say so? Because who benefits by the truth, the American people or Russian propaganda?

I'm going to ask that question now of a distinguished American, one you've all heard about -- a household word, I guess -- Senator Barry Goldwater....

What's your view of -- I suppose you've read, Senator Goldwater, in the press that the resistance is forcing Mr. Brezhnev to behave -- to be revealed as the conqueror that he is in Afghanistan. But the papers also say that the resistance is being sponsored by the CIA. What's your view of that?

SENATOR BARRY GOLDWATER: Well, the suggestions by The New York Times and The Washington Post don't surprise me a bit. But I think anybody that would care to think about it would realize the impossibility of it. How can one agency of the United States Government, the CIA, possibly furnish enough arms and ammunition and weapons of war into a country the size of Afghanistan, a country that is so remote in its nature that merely getting the equipment around would be an impossibility.

Now, there is a possibility that the CIA has been in some way helping. But on a massive scale, with such short notice, I don't believe that's true.

BRADEN: Well, that's my view too, Senator. Except that I have another question, which has always bothered me, it has bothered me all my life, ever since I was in the CIA. You

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remember when we invaded Cuba, the CIA invaded Cuba, and The New York Times killed the story. They had some tip-offs about it and they killed it. And they were sorry later. They said -- I think John Kennedy at one time said, "I wish that they'd gone ahead and printed it."

I find it very difficult to know whether or not it's worth it to the American people to say that the CIA is in this game, or whether it'd be better just to shut up.

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Well, I think some of these actions that we call covert should not be known by the American people. And this is one of the objections that we raised when the reports were made of so-called covert action being leaked from White House sources. Now, that's a pretty hard leak to question.

But I get back to my original premise -- and I'm not at all at liberty to discuss in full detail with you this matter. How can an agency -- and you were connected with it -- on very, very short notice, put together the arms, ammunition, etcetera, needed to make that kind of a supply maneuver?

Now, if they're being supplied with arms, my feeling is that the arms are coming in from Pakistan or they already have their arms.

Now, you have to keep in mind this -- and I'll tell you something else. I've been in Afghanistan during the war and I've flown over the country, and I think I have a feeling for it. They are amongst the world's best manufacturers of weapons. Now, they're guns that you'd look at and say, "My God, I wouldn't shoot that." But I'll tell you, you can hit most anything you can see with them. And on top of that, they have a very large supply of the old -- not the old, the MK-14, the Czechoslovakian automatic rifle, which is probably the world's best.

So I really don't think that we've had to play any big part, if we had -- if we have, in the supply of arms to the Afghanistan.

PAT BUCHANAN: Let me ask you this, Senator. You make a persuasive case -- you make a persuasive case that the large, 30-province effort against the Soviets could not conceivably be supplied by an American intelligence agency. But let's assume that there is some sort of a covert linkage between the CIA and some small measure of supplies going in, which I think a lot of Americans would approve of. What do you think of the ethics of the press coming upon this and then revealing it?

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Well, that's a pretty hard one to answer. If a leak is made, it's made for the purpose, as you know, of the press using it. Now, I don't blame the press for

printing material that they receive from dependable sources, such as the White House, such as the Pentagon or other places where leaks occur. I think that the press would be much better off if they would inquire of the intelligence agencies as to what they were up to, if there was any truth to the reports.

This matter, for example, of the revelation of the so-called covert action in Afghanistan was leaked, and the leak did us a lot of damage, particularly the way the Soviets have used the material in trying to tell the rest of the world that we are supply Afghanistan with arms.

Now, I think first you have to understand that country. The flag of Afghanistan doesn't mean a whole lot to the average citizen of that country. They fight for what we out in the West call the back 40. They'll fight for their families and they'll fight for their land. And because the country is so hard to get into, so mountainous, this is what's giving the Russians a hard time. They can't clean the troops out, can't clean the guerrillas out. They've run into a situation somewhat like what we ran into in Vietnam.

BUCHANAN: The reason I ask the question, Senator, is that in the lead paragraph of the lead story in The Post today, they talk about the Soviet-supported government is now facing a great threat from a popular insurgency, an insurgency that's become the focus of aid efforts, it says, quote, by outsiders, including possibly the Central Intelligence Agency.

And it seemed to me, as a journalist, that was just gratuitously flipped in there. And I just don't see what value that is to the American people to have to know that particular little item, even if it's true.

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Well, I don't think there's any value in it, either, to the American people. I have -- maybe I'm old-fashioned in this, but I think the intelligence service should be a service that gathers intelligence for us and performs duties and missions of a nature that we should not know about. I'm not one of these modern types that think we have to tell the American people every time we breathe and turn over just so that the Soviets and our other enemies can have access to that material.

BRADEN: Well, it's a small point, Senator, but I want to bring it up because it's an old creed of mine ever since I left the agency, and particularly in view of recent revelations. I just wish that the covert arm of our CIA were housed somewhere in Washington and that there was a sign outside that said "Department of Buildings and Grounds," and that none of us ever knew about it.

SENATOR GOLDWATER: I couldn't agree with you more. The effectiveness, as you know -- you've been in this job. The effectiveness of the British and the Russian intelligence is not their gathering ability, because I think we have probably better gathering. It's the fact that nobody knows what the other guy's doing.

BRADEN: That's right.

SENATOR GOLDWATER: And this is intelligence at its best. And I wish we had a CIA or any of our intelligence groups that even two brothers didn't know about.

BRADEN: All right, Senator. Thank you very much.